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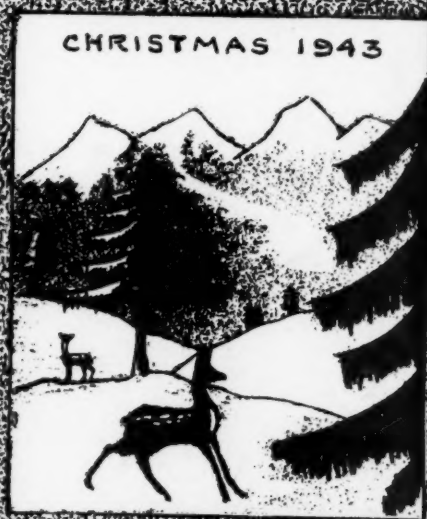
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DECEMBER, 1943 • VOL. X, No. 4

*Edited by* PETER HUGH REED

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# The American MUSIC LOVER

December, 1943 • VOL. X, No. 4

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## Editorial Notes

By Paul Girard

The editor, who feels that he has done enough elsewhere in this issue, has asked the writer to scribble some notes this month. Let us say at the outset that we regret our inability to help all our readers as much as we would like. Technical men who can be relied upon are as scarce as total eclipses. Finding records today is another problem. We get many requests for help in this field, but we are not to do much about it. Some readers have been resourceful and patient enough to write to all the stores listed in our Record Buyers' Guide. This Guide, of course, does not list all the stores throughout the country in which the magazine is sold. In ordinary times, only stores in large cities where competition is keen, avail themselves of a listing; in out-of-the-way localities and small towns, where the store that handles the magazine is the recognized musical center, it would hardly be worthwhile for such a store to list itself, unless, of course, it were seeking out-of-town trade. But in times like them, when readers would like to write to many stores, there would seem to be good reason for dealers in smaller communities to join our list. However, the stores now listed might possibly be able to fill our needs, and if you are really anxious to acquire a certain recording you will simply have to do a bit of shopping

around. Sending cards to the various stores might bring results; if you do not shake the cherry tree, as the old saying goes, you do not get any fruit.

Editorially speaking, we are seated on the edge of the chair. The fact is that we do not fit in the editorial chair and are just pinch hitting. We are not trying to sell something, but just making some suggestions. It has never been this publication's policy to give advertisers editorial space, and we do not endeavor to sell advertising via the editorial department. The suggestions offered above aim to help the reader.

\* \* \*

Somewhere in unoccupied Italy (our guess would be Naples) that diligent and highly record-conscious young musician Pvt. Leo Goldstein has dug up more information for us about recordings issued in Germany and France during the year 1941. Pvt. Goldstein hints at a new series of recordings by Furtwaengler and the Berlin Philharmonic for Telefunken; one title appears in the list printed elsewhere in this issue.

"That a nation which was well on its way to the completion of its second year at war," writes Pvt. Goldstein, "could find enough time for a company of the calibre of Telefunken to publish some of the un-

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doubtedly outstanding items which have been listed, speaks well for the musical outlook of Germany, despite its many barbarous and cruel deeds. Although it is to be regretted that many musicians have had to leave Germany for racial and political reasons, their loss is our gain. It is only to be hoped that Boss Petrillo and the record companies have by now settled their differences so that America may be musically enriched by the plethora of musicians which is now our heritage for posterity."

Letters from many of the boys in the Armed Forces constantly refer to the ban on new recordings being lifted. If they are surprised to learn that no settlement of the matter is yet in sight, so are we. The dearth of new recordings suggests that the companies are getting down to the bottom of the barrel. Still, we have reasons to believe that there are a few more plums. There are rumors that some of Toscanini's recordings made with the Philadelphia Orchestra and the NBC will shortly be issued. Incidentally, the article Mr. Reed hoped to write with or about the noted Italian Maestro has unfortunately had to be postponed. Toscanini has been inaccessible for many months, and with the fighting going on in his native Italy one can understand the reasons.

\* \* \*

This month a new writer, Mr. Stephen Fassett, joins our staff. He is a specialist on old recordings of the famous singers who faced a small horn in the wall rather than the modern microphone. Mr. Fassett will conduct a "Collectors' Corner" regularly. Upon occasion, he will also contribute an article about a noted singer of the past along the lines of his article this month on Edmond Clement.

The many readers who have written to express their appreciation of Mr. Reed's Operatic Survey will be pleased to know that his first installment on the Wagner recordings will appear in our January,

1944, issue. Following this, the editor's second installment on his Chamber Music Survey will appear.

\* \* \*

Harry Futterman, of the Armed Forces Master Records, Inc., writes us that Mr. Reed's summary of the organization's activities last month was an excellent one—"the only correction might be that we do not ask for records anymore. We get too much junk, and there is also too much breakage in shipment. Those who wish to help can send as little as \$1.00; we can always buy some Strauss' waltzes or a Mozart or Beethoven overture. If three or more folks get together and all send \$1.00 each, we can buy a set. Don't forget we get the records at wholesale, since the record companies are pleased to cooperate with us."

The Armed Forces Master Records, Inc. has no axe to grind. Its guiding spirit has been Mr. Futterman, and he has done a lot of work on the behalf of our boys for which he has not taken a penny by way of recompense. Out of the money given to this organization only a small amount has been spent on the necessary things like stationary, shipping expenses, etc. Several women have given their services as stenographers in spare time to help the cause along. So, do not think your dollar won't go to a good cause or be judiciously used. Mr. Futterman knows better than most of us what the boys want in good music, and he makes every effort to supply them with their requests. There have been over 600 full libraries of 100 records each distributed to date by the AFMR. Many are at far flung bases across the seas, others are on ships and in submarines, and many more are in various camps in this country. Some units, like the one Cpl. Miller is with, have an AFMR record library of their own, which is shipped around with them. Undoubtedly, if this unit goes overseas, that record library will go too.

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## IS SENTIMENTAL MUSIC BAD MUSIC?

By Neville d'Esterre

The purpose of the professional moralist is to add an eleventh commandment to the accepted ten. The supplementary commandment of the *doyen* of modern moralists, George Bernard Shaw, is: "Thou shalt not be sentimental."

Shaw has exposed the perilous absurdity of sentimentalism, and demonstrated the heroic character of common-sense. There was a time when he used to tell us what he admired in music; but this came to an end in the days of the Strauss tone poems. We have merely a semi-official notification that he approves warmly of Elgar's *Second Symphony*, and considers that Elgar is no more vulgar than Beethoven. "Vulgar" and "sentimental" we may take to be interchangeable terms; and our opinion on this last point is the same as his.

Several years ago a certain Doctor of Music was accompanying a charming young singer in some songs of Grieg. The singer said to him, "Do you like sentimental music?" To which he replied, "I love it." Over a quarter of a century ago the same individual, not a Doctor of Music then, was sitting at a grand piano discussing, with illustrations, the kind of music that he preferred, and endeavoring to convert a gentleman of strongly Vic-

torian antipathies to a belief in the magic of Wagner. He showed his rightness of perception by choosing the descending chromatics of Wotan's *Farewell* to illustrate his point. The Victorian gentleman made noises indicative of grudging assent; and then, fixing a glaring eye upon an irreverent modern youth who was present (now a sad, disillusioned person of middle age) said, "Some people today think that by constantly disparaging the music of Mendelssohn they show their superior culture."

The professional musician laughed. "Oh, Mendelssohn is jolly enough, at times," he said, and began to play the beginning of the *Italian Symphony*. (Being an organist, he could reel off almost anything from memory). That, however, was not quite what the Victorian gentleman wanted. The Mendelssohn who appealed to him was not the pseudo-classic of that clever show piece, exhibiting his technical skill in the manner of Mozart and Weber; nor was it the bold color painter of *Fingal's Cave*, nor yet the saintly exponent of a chaste and flawless culture who heaved an exquisite sigh in the key of D minor, and drew therefrom a chain of lovely variations, rightly described as *Serious Variations* upon an original theme. No, our



Victorian friend of the glaring eye was thinking of the slow movements of the *Violin Concerto* and the *C minor Trio*, and the cavatina from *St. Paul*, and that *Song Without Words* called *Consolation*.

Such was the music (we know this as a fact) which struck an answering chord in the soul of this gentleman. Although he did not indicate these four pieces by name, he did, on this occasion, begin to hum the slow movement of the *C minor Trio* to show what was in his mind. The presumption was that he appreciated equally all other music of that type whether by Mendelssohn or by anybody else. These four examples are mentioned particularly here because of certain observations upon them made by Sir W. H. Hadow who, in discussing the virtues and defects of Mendelssohn, says:

"His relation to contemporary musicians is like that of Addison to other writers of the Augustan age . . . Addison never rose to the height of the *Elijah Overture*, or of the great choruses, or of the first movement of the *Octet*, just as he never sank to the level of the *Song Without Words in E* [the 'Consolation' mentioned above], or of the 'Cavatina' from *St. Paul*, or of the slow movements of the *Violin Concerto* and the *Piano Trio in C minor*. But Mendelssohn is always at his worst when he is sentimental."

#### A Mild Vice

This is only too true; for to be sentimental is to shrink from the great and terrible truths of the universe, from the understanding of which spring all nobility of thought and splendor of fancy, and to take refuge in meagre unconsidered sympathies, having no meaning apart from the trivial objects which inspire them. It is a vice in a mild form; and the Romantic Movement, by releasing the creative artist from the iron-bound austerities of style which governed the preceding period, encouraged in all but the strongest that form of self-indulgence. The death-bed scenes of Little Nell and Paul Dombry, and the dyspeptic throbings of the tight-laced soul of Helen Pendennis, found their counterpart in the music of Spohr and Mendelssohn. The next period produced Robert

Browning, and Wagner, and Verdi, and Flaubert and Dostoevsky, who showed, as Goethe and Beethoven had already showed, that art emancipated could scale greater heights than it had ever reached under inflexible laws of artistic conduct. You have merely to compare Wagner with Handel, or Browning with Pope, to understand this. The aims of these artists were similar in each case.

#### What Price Sentiment?

But is this sentimental music bad music? When we allow ourselves to listen to it with effortless appreciation (for it is always easy to follow) do we run the risk of demoralizing our higher selves, and blunting the keen edge of our perceptions? The writer is well aware that when he listens to the slow movement of Mendelssohn's *Trio* (as rendered, for example, in the English Columbia recording by Murdoch, Tertis and Sammons), the experience is by no means nauseating, and does not even grate in an ugly way upon the senses. It seems quite evident that Mendelssohn enjoyed writing that music; and the "Sunday at Home" feeling expressed in the opening notes has not prevented the composer from evolving, as the movement proceeds, a contrapuntal structure of which Bach or Beethoven need not have been ashamed. To declare that any such music is bad music is to fill your public dust-cart pretty full.

There is a tendency at the present day, affecting amateur musicians rather than professionals, to be priggish and pedantic in these matters. We are led to believe that anybody who can listen to Mendelssohn on the sentimental tack without writhing in agonies of execration, becomes quite incapable of seeing his way into real music, such as Bach's *Chromatic Fantasia*, or the third movement of Beethoven's *Quartet in F major, Opus 59, No. 1*. But this is not the teaching of experience. Admittedly sentimentalism is a species of mild vice; but, as the Emperor Hadrian has wisely reminded us, we are human beings also, and indulgence in mild vice is an essential impulse of our nature, which enables us to know our virtues on the rare occasions when we meet them. To

suppress that impulse is to open the way to faults less pardonable; and to be sentimental for half-an-hour is not nearly as bad as to be pedantic for half a lifetime.

After all, what a lot of humbug there is in all this! No rational lover of art will deny that sentimentalism is a backsliding in an artist, and may become a bad habit if persisted in. That is obvious and elementary. But, if not equally elementary, it is equally obvious that there is no great straight road between the art of the great masters and the art of Balfe and his counterpart in literature Felicia Hemans. Technically speaking, the distance is not worth mentioning; and in the matter of design and construction there is little to choose between Schubert's *Gretchen at the Spinning Wheel* and Balfe's *I dreamt that I dwelt in Marble Halls*. When an artist desires to express himself emotionally, but has no spontaneous utterance of that sort in the forefront of his mind, and is not prepared to fall back on purely artistic expression until the moment of inspiration comes, he will, in all probability, express himself in a sentimental manner. That is the simple way of his difficulty, and in taking advantage of it he can easily persuade himself that it is uttering the truth that is in him. And if his craftsmanship is good and he applies it thoroughly to the task the result may be satisfactory enough.

#### Few Are Tempted

Few great artists have risen wholly to the temptation mentioned; and those who have risen wholly superior have done so by method, and by method alone. Beethoven's method, for example, of constructing his works precluded sentimentalism; so that, when his utterances were not responsive to powerful and deep-seated emotion—in other words, for most of the time—he was speaking in purely musical terms. About fifty of his compositions may be cited to show that this was not so; but we appeal to the rest—to the vast accumulation of his music which the concert-goer rarely hears—to prove that it was so precisely.

The same is true, on the whole, of Bach, of Mozart, of Wagner from *Das Rhein-*

*gold* onwards (he was apt to wallow in his earlier operas), of Verdi in his later phase, of César Franck, and of Brahms. These had the method which enabled them to avoid sentimentalism. The other great masters had not the method, and could not avoid it; and those who were directly influenced by the Romantic Movement—Mendelssohn and Schumann especially—allowed it to become a habit. The habit was a bad one, but the artistic results were not necessarily bad. The recipient can drink in his sentimental music unscathed, so long as it comes to him in the general run of things. It is only when he allows it to take hold of him to the exclusion of austerity that his system begins to be affected by its toxic properties. There is no harm in loving *Consolation*, or the slow movement from Mendelssohn's *C minor Trio*, or again the *Andante cantabile* from Tchaikovsky's *D major Quartet* if you love the *Seventh Symphony* of Beethoven and the *Prelude* to Wagner's *Die Meistersinger* even equally well. The person, however, who can listen quite contently to any of the above pieces immediately after a performance of Beethoven's *Seventh* or the *Meistersinger Prelude* is simply not musical. The point is there is room for both; and exclusiveness, in any case, is not the road to clear understanding.\*

#### Sentimentalism Inverted

And the anti-sentimentalist is always in danger of inverted sentimentalism. We have been warned lately by two thinkers so utterly remote from one another as Hilaire Belloc and Aldous Huxley that the modern blind worship of science is a species of romanticism even more injurious to morality than the old exaltation of fictitious human qualities. The new musical puritans, who, instead of regarding analysis as a useful adjunct of appreciation, regard appreciation as a tiresome impediment to analysis, cease to be music lovers in any acceptable sense at all. That the power to analyze is the first essential of constructive criticism nobody doubts; but, in the absence of enthusiasm and the

\* Mr. d'Esterre might have pointed out here also that the person who separates willfully the slow movements of the Mendelssohn *Trio* or the Tchaikovsky *Quartet* is also not musical. — Ed.

will to surrender to emotion, analysis becomes a mere sorting of our dry sticks. A professional artist to whom the study of music meant no more than that would starve for want of employment. Feeling is at the root of all artistic expression, and he who has no feeling has no sense of art. These new Puritans of ours are quite definitely unmusical. That is why they take jazz seriously, and suffer the purely mechanical developments of atonality with the stupid imperturbability of

fat hogs in the market place.

The eleventh commandment of Shaw may be left at that; for what is true of music in this connection is equally true of everything else within the range of artistic expression. And, when all is said and done, this new seer of ours is one of the greatest sentimentalists of the lot of us. That, of course, is why he disapproves so strongly of sentimentalism. A really unsentimental person would never bother his head about it.

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## BOOK REVIEW

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**MUSIC LOVER'S HANDBOOK.** Edited by Elie Seigmeister. William Morrow & Co., New York, N. Y. 817 pp. Price \$4.00.

▲ This book purports to be an anthology for the general music lover. It was planned to have a wide appeal, as is understandable in the case of books published as dividends for the Book of the Month Club. The general tone of the book is informal. For example, the tuba is described as the instrument that is an inviting target for peanut shells.

The editor has assembled the various chapters and articles from authorities in their respective fields. In those instances where writings by authorities were not available to complete the editor's outline, he has supplied the material himself. He has done so rather frequently for a true anthology.

The book is divided into seven sections. The first of these, entitled *Fiddle Strings and Ballads*, concerns ballads, folk music and other music close to the people. Two articles by Vaughan Williams printed here are recommended.

The second section, entitled *How Music Is Made*, this reviewer found to be the most interesting. Copland's article, *How the Composer Works*, and Scholes' *Putting a Composition Together* cover subject matter not ordinarily discussed in the books and other publications generally available to the layman.

The third section, *In the Concert Hall*,

contains brief sketches of the better known symphonies and concert works. A great many of these thumbnail sketches are taken from *Symphonic Masterpieces* by Olin Downes. I have never been an admirer of Downes' book, and the selection offered here has not caused me to change my mind about it.

Section four, *High C's and Pirouettes*, comprises 70 pages devoted to opera, which may be characterized as "culture in three capsules." The next section, *Meet the Composer*, consists of brief biographies beginning with Bach and ending with Ravel. This biographical portion of the book continues through the next two sections, which are entitled *In Our Times* and *Music of America*. The first of these includes articles devoted to Stravinsky, Hindemith, Prokofiev, Shostakovich, etc., and is followed by articles on Music in the Films, Radio, and Phonograph. Ewen's article, *Music and the Phonograph*, contains nothing that is not known to readers of this magazine. In the discussion of *Music of America*, composers such as MacDowell, Griffes, Charles Ives, etc. are included. One may question the editor's judgment here in allotting a chapter each to George Gershwin, Morton Gould and Marc Blitzstein, listing their Tin Pan Alley works, etc., when Roy Harris, whose symphonies have been played by Koussevitzky and Toscanini, is dismissed with a paragraph.

(Continued on page 112)

The American Music Lover





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## THE RECORDED SONGS OF GRIEG

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By PETER HUGH REED

### PART II

(Continued from last month)

Grieg's *Ballad in G minor, Opus 24*, marked a turning point in his artistic career. That this work should be followed by a series of Grieg's deepest and most inspired songs, Monrad-Johansen contends, is but natural. The Ibsen songs (Opus 25), which followed, prove that Grieg "in his best moments penetrates with rare insight into the very heart of a poem, and with a few bold and vivid strokes sets before us a glowing picture, and stamps it indelibly with his own sign and seal on our hearts and minds" (Walter Ford in *Grove's*). It is the "heart" element, or poetic quality, that often makes or breaks a composer's art. The modernists shun sentiment in art, yet sentiment remains one of its prime elements and assets. The honesty of Grieg's sentiment cannot be denied; but our admiration of his music remains contingent upon our acceptance of his realization of this element in his art. In his songs, I repeat, this particular quality is more enduringly set forth than anywhere else in his music.

Monrad-Johansen speaks of the undeserved neglect of two of the Ibsen songs (Opus 25)—*The Minstrel's Song* and *Departed*; they are practically never heard in the concert hall. This is largely due to

the fact that both are ungrateful to singers "whose principal thought is to show off their voices." Thinking about these songs, Grieg's biographer adds a delightful touch: he says it is well understandable why the composer wrote Finck (when the latter was writing his biography), that he (Grieg) "often marvelled at the way in which Mother Nature deals out singing voices to just those people who do not possess either the intelligence or the depth of feeling to use their voices to serve a higher purpose."

I have already spoken of two songs from Opus 25: *The Swan* (No. 2) a truly great lied, and *Verse from an Album* (No. 3).

*With a Waterlily, Op. 25, No. 4*, is an enchanting song; "it is aptly named an *allegro grazioso*, the melody poising on the chords as the lilies on their slender stems" (Finck). Monrad-Johansen tells us that "to get the true impression of this song, which is filled with springtime rapture and youthful longing, beneath which there run also deep and dangerous undercurrents, one should have heard it rendered by Nina Grieg with the composer at the piano." Perhaps so, but since Nina Grieg was unable to record her singing for posterity, one turns to the recording of Povla Frijsh (Victor 2079); she brings to Ibsen's lines, which so happily inspired Grieg, the requisite archness and nuance

of phrasing. Miss Desmond is less successful, partly because of the unfortunate balance between her voice and the piano.

*Hope (Et Haab)*, Op. 26, No. 1, is a song of springtime jubilation and the joy of life. Mr. Miller termed it "an ecstatic song of hope." Its objective qualities find a happy realization in Flagstad's effulgent singing.

*'Twas on a lovely Eve in June (Am schoensten Sommerabend war's)*, Op. 26, No. 2, is in the nature of a folk song. The words, like those of the previous lied, are by one of Norway's favorite poets, John Paulson. There are three verses, each utilizing the same accompaniment. The poet on a lovely summer eve discovers a maid, tending her goats, knitting and dreamily gazing over the fjord. The minor mood is one almost of nostalgia, particularly in the latter part, marked *dolce e tranquillo*. Finck points out that the last bars own "a peculiarly haunting effect," illustrating Grieg's avoidance of the commonplace, "particularly at the end of a song or piece." This *lied* deserves to be sung more often. Tauber's recording is one his admirers may well cherish.

*The First Primrose*, Op. 26, No. 4 has been called the ideal song for a first introduction to Grieg's style. Here, by the simplest of means the composer produces effects that the listener is not apt to forget. It sings of love, of youth and spring—Paulson's poem begins, "O take, thou fairest child of spring, this first flower . . ." The lover offers the flower in exchange for her heart. Only those who have forgotten their youth and the springtime of life will fail to respond to the romantic rapture of this spontaneous expression. Flagstad curiously fails to do this song justice; she does not catch the requisite lilt or the spirit of youthfulness. Miss Desmond does better, but one wishes Noréna had recorded it.

*Springtime (Der Fruebling)*, Op. 33, No. 2. There is a story that when Tchaikovsky heard Nina Grieg sing this song he was moved to tears. To express his gratitude he later sent her his own songs, with a friendly greeting. *Der Fruebling* is one of Grieg's tenderest and most mov-

ing lieder. The melodic and harmonic devices show how much a poem meant to Grieg, for he seeks and achieves a vivid setting in every phrase of the poet's words. Though the pattern of the song repeats itself in strophes, one would not change a note or wish it to be different. Noréna's recording, sung in the original Norwegian, which is greatly preferable to the German translation, is beautifully rendered; her voice is like a silver thread, poised in space, effortless yet expressive. Noréna alone achieves the subjectivity of the mood which both the poet and the musician have sought to bring about. Tauber sang the song well in his early recording, but in his later one (Decca 20251) the expression conveyed is far too personal and too sentimentalized. Moreover, his inartistic effect at the end of a fall from tonic to tonic, instead of one from the third to the tonic as Grieg wrote it, destroys the mood. A very curious rendition of this song remains the version that Conchita Supervia essayed in French (Odeon 184226); it is neither one of the singer's best recordings nor a convincing interpretation.

*The Wounded Heart*, Op. 33, No. 3, is closely associated with the foregoing, since Grieg arranged them both for string orchestra, giving them new titles—*The Last Spring* and *Heart Wounds*. In life's struggle the heart is sorely wounded; this is the poetic theme of the song. There are three verses, but perhaps the most desirable way of presenting both this and the preceding song is to sing but two stanzas. Erling Krogh, the Norwegian tenor, seems to be the only singer who has recorded this composition (H.M.V. X2673). Not having heard the record, I cannot comment on the singer's artistry.

*Was ich sah* (in the original *Eit Syn*, or *A Vision*), Op. 33, No. 6, is concerned with love at first sight. Monrad-Johansen says "within the framework of an ecstatically moving dance" (a waltz pattern) it "paints a vivid picture of a woman." This is a song of remembrance on the sentimental side, which requires artistic subtlety to do it justice. Tauber sang it with manly tenderness. It seems strange that no other singer has recorded this composition. I

should have liked to have heard Melchior sing it in his youth.

While on the subject of Opus 33, mention should be made of *On the Way Home* (*Ved Rundarne*) No. 9, which along with *The Old Mother*, No. 7, Monrad-Johansen tells us "is among the best known and loved of Grieg's songs and in Norway has for a long time been a treasured national expression." It seems curious that neither of these songs has been recorded.

*From Monte Pincio*, Op. 39, No. 1, is a picturesque song inspired by the famous "hill of gardens" at Rome. Finck points out that Bjoernson, the poet, "touches on the various points of view which occur to a poet's observant and reminiscent mind on a visit to a picturesque place; and Grieg's music, with a realistic art worthy of both Schubert and Liszt, reproduces all these aspects in his music—the glowing sunset, the swarming people, the domes of the city below, the mists calling up dim memories of the past and prophecies as to a future awakening of Rome to her former glory." Noréna does full justice to this imposing picture.

*Verborg'ne Liebe* or *Hidden Love*, Op. 39, No. 2, is difficult to sing well. Bjoernson's poem about the youth and the maid who are never able to profess their love for each other might have emanated from any country (Heine or de Musset might have written it), but the music is unmistakably Grieg's. This is Norse music, employing Grieg's favorite melodic trick—the fall from the seventh to the fifth and from the third to the tonic. Finck calls attention to melodic steps that illustrates a relationship between Scandinavian and Oriental art. This song, too, I should liked to have heard Melchior sing in his prime; Tauber's recording, however, does justice to it, although his naturally plaintive voice stresses the sentiment, but his phrasing and articulation are free from the "schmalzing" heard in his later recordings.

*The Way of the World* (*Lauf der Welt*), Op. 48, No. 3. Midway in his career, Grieg chose to write the six songs of Opus 48 to German words, and in so doing to lean as he had in his youth upon German romanticism. But let us quote Monrad-Johansen: "Having followed Grieg from

his early youth, from his Leipzig period when he stood with both feet firmly planted in the artistic life of Germany, followed his gradual development as a romantic composer through Danish lyricism in transition to Norwegian lyricism, followed him in his even richer development through Bjoernson's and Ibsen's poetry till at last he attains . . . that really broad and general view of his individuality only reached by an artist on the great heights . . . one gets from these songs to German texts a depressing feeling that, in spite of everything, labor has been in vain." *The Way of the World* is not one of Grieg's best lieder. The poem by Ludwig Uhland tells of how everything is understood in love without formal words. There is a close association between this composition and the finale of the composer's cello sonata, which again is not an important work. The American tenor Larbert Murphy recorded this song in an English text (in Victor's Educational List, disc 24791); one feels that the singer did as much as could be done for it.

*Ein Traum* (*A Dream*), Op. 48, No. 6, is a love song in the Heine tradition; the words are by Mirza - Schaffy, a popular German poetess. "In dreams I had a vision fair, I wooed a maid with blond hair . . ." One feels like exclaiming who hasn't! In the song, the poet's dream-blond becomes a reality. The best of Opus 48, *Ein Traum* has always been popular in the concert hall, no doubt because it builds to a stirring, though obvious, climax. Monrad - Johansen speaks of its slightly bombastic melody; I have always felt that the song bordered on the pompous and that the climax is not only bombastic but too abrupt. Tauber sings *Ein Traum* splendidly, building up to an exciting climax. Crooks' version exploits an English translation that should have prompted Grieg to roll over in his grave. As Miller said: "Surely there should be some poetic standard even for translations"; it might be well too if some singers were taught taste in such matters as well as in others. Tonally, Flagstad's version of this song is lustrous, although by no means fully expressive of the poetic text. To my way of thinking, *Ein Traum* is a man's song.

Gigli's version (H.M.V. DA1504) is in true operatic style; but the old Brunswick record by Karen Branzell (disc No. 85013) has a certain dark majesty. Since Tauber's recording is no longer available, I recommend the Flagstad version.

*Rock, O Wave (Vug, O Vove)*, Op. 49, No. 2 and *Spring Rain (Foraarsregn)*, Op. 49, No. 6. The songs of Opus 49 are nature impressions, descriptive verses for which Grieg had a special penchant. The poems are by the Norwegian writer, Holger Drachmann. In the first "we follow him out into spacious and frequented seaways which can well be pleasant and varied but in which it is never very exciting to sail" (Monrad-Johansen). *Spring Rain* has subtlety of line and tonal nuance; the hand of Grieg is unmistakable. Miss Desmond voices both songs effectively.

*To Norway (Til Norge)*, Op. 58, No. 1 is a nationalistic song of special appeal to Norwegians. Melchior sings it with appropriate fervor. (Victor disc 2188).

*In the Boat (Im Kåbne)*, Op. 60, No. 3, known in the original Norwegian as *Mens jeg venter (While I wait)*, is among Grieg's most favored songs. Nordica, Gadske and Schumann-Heink often sang it in concert; the latter also recorded it (Victor 87170). It is a song of the fjord, gay and carefree, which, Finck points out, illustrates, among other things, "the charm of Grieg's modulations, in which he equals Schubert." It pursues the folk pattern with three verses, but is fanciful and elaborate. One can hardly imagine a singer tiring of *Mens jeg venter*; it allows for subtleties of nuance which each time, depending upon the vocalist's ability, might well vary slightly. Flagstad sings it well, bringing to it several moments of rare expressiveness, her last phrase in particular being a memorable one. The American tenor George Hamlin, who was a gifted lieder singer in his day, has left us a fine memento of his artistry in his recording (Victor 64248). Heinrich Rehkemper, the German baritone who once possessed the gift of making the listener feel he was singing especially to him (can anyone forget the inimitable intimacy of his voicing of Schubert's *Am Bach im Fruehling* and *Sei mir gegruesset?*—Polydor 95103), like-

wish has sung a fine version, which conveys delightfully the lilt of the melody (Polydor 23150). However, it should be noted that Grieg intended this song for a high voice, and it is my belief that its buoyant lyrical qualities are better substantiated by the soprano or tenor voice. Joseph Hislop also recorded this song; it is on the reverse face of his recording of *A Swan* (H.M.V. DA890). Sung in the original Norwegian, his version reveals a nice feeling for the alternate moods of the poem; he particularly evidences a delicate handling of such phrases as "Ducklings strutting in yellow socks, fine feathers—", which is both manly and charmingly carefree. Tauber's version was well sung with a real rhythmic lilt, but his use of interpolated embellishments is not laudable.

*Screamed a Bird (Der skreg en Fugl)*, Op. 60, No. 4, is most effective. Monrad-Johansen says it "has the savor of the salt sea, while the opening bars on the piano give expression, true to nature, of the bird's pain-filled cry in the gray autumn day." The bird-cry is an actual imitation of a seagull, which Grieg heard in the Hardanger fjord. Miss Desmond succeeds admirably in conveying the bleak picture of this composition.

*St. John's Eve (Og jeg vil ha mig)*, Op. 60, No. 5, is full of rollicking humor and youthful joyousness. "Over the fields wet with dew we go on the beautiful eve of St. John . . ." Grieg treats us to modulations here which evidence his genius in song-writing. Rehkemper tends to overdramatize this song; his is a healthy exuberance rather than a rollicking humor. The Flagstad recording is greatly preferable.

*Lok (Call)*, Op. 61, No. 3 and *Our Native Land or Fatherland Psalm*, Op. 61, No. 7. Opus 61 contains seven *Children's Songs* which are truly charming. Nina Grieg sang them first in public, and one can imagine how she revelled in their interpretation. She had sufficient sense of the fanciful to do justice to such things. The poem of *Call* is by Bjoersøn. There is a Scandinavian Columbia record of this song sung by Huda F. Gran, which I have never heard (disc DN217). *Our Native Land*, to a poem by Rolfsen, is an effective patriotic composition, which Conrad

Thibault sings very well indeed in an English translation (Victor disc 11829). It is curious that the best of Opus 61, *Havet or The Ocean*, has never been recorded.

*Der gynger en Baad paa Boelge* (*A Boat on the Waves is Rocking*), Op. 69, No. 1, which Flagstad sings, has been praised for its fresh youthful feeling and its splendidly built-up climax. That it is among Grieg's most effective songs few will deny after hearing Flagstad sing it. It is more dramatic than *Megs jeg venter*, and though it conveys the rocking movement of the boat in the piano part, it does not show the same consistency in the writing, but this again allows for more dramatic effect.

*Haugtussa or The Mountain Maid*, Op. 67. Monrad-Johansen tells us that Grieg was "flung into a transport of enthusiasm" upon reading *Haugtussa*, by the Norwegian folk-poet, Arne Garborg, and he "wrote in a very short space of time" the eight songs of the cycle. Further, he says these songs "were again proof that only poetry of genius could set his [Grieg's] deepest and finest strings vibrating; as though in psychic communication he follows the poet's, innermost thoughts, deepens and visualizes his visions, and re-creates his picture world." In many ways, this is the Norwegian parallel of Schumann's *Frauenliebe und Leben*, but how much more enchanting is Garborg's tale and how exquisitely right seems every bar of Grieg's music. *Haugtussa's* tragedy is one of faithlessness. In *Vond Dag* (*The Evil Day*), she awaits her lover's coming in vain; this is one of Grieg's most beautiful love songs. The final song, *Ved Gjaetle-Baekken* (*By the Brook*) makes a consoling ending, for though there are expressions of longing and pain, it is as though "Nature herself lays a softening veil over the whole, rocks the mind to rest, gives forgetfulness and peace." Flagstad's singing of these songs represents her artistry at its height in the more intimate lied; Mr. Miller believes her rendition of this cycle is the finest thing she has accomplished for the phonograph, and the recording by which she can best be remembered by posterity.

*Eros*, Op. 70, No. 1, shows the influence of Wagner. The texts of this and the suc-

ceeding song under discussion, *Lys Nat*, are by Otto Benzon, a Danish poet. One wonders whether it was the origin of the poems that caused Grieg to forsake his national characteristics. Eros speaks: "Hear me, ye frosty hearts of the North, ye who seek peace in renouncing resignedly . . . Cherish her who is completely thine own . . . This is the greatest and most boundless joy men may know." The writing here almost approaches operatic effects with its dramatic middle section and its imposing climax. Melchior sings this song with more masculine fervor than vocal clarity (Victor 2188), but one feels it fits his voice and style of singing. The German versions by Walther Ludwig and Karl Schmidt-Walter I have never heard. The late Joseph Schwarz left us a magnificent souvenir of his extraordinary artistry in a recording of this song which I value highly (Polydor 70599). Curiously, it is backed by a version of Weingartner's *Liebesfeier*, sung with youthful verve by Melchior. This record dates from about 1920.

*Lys Nat* (*Light Night*), Op. 70, No. 3 is not a great song, nor is it characteristic of Grieg. Nevertheless it remains most impressive, as Flagstad voices it with radiant tonal beauty. The poet seeing the hint of dawn asks "Is it yesterday's golden light . . . has all passed with night and dreaming . . . must thou depart? Radiant night, so swift-winged!" Grieg employs some effective modulations, but the piano accompaniment is not very striking. Finck has said of this song that it is sufficiently cosmopolitan to please even the German critic who objected to Grieg because he "struck in the fjord"; however, "most of us like him best" in the fjord, "where he sang his loveliest melodies and dreamed his quaintest harmonies."

*Solveig's Song*, Op. 23, No. 1 and *Solveig's Cradle Song*, Op. 23, No. 2. Last but not least come the two songs from Ibsen's *Peer Gynt*, which all the world knows and sings. The music of *Peer Gynt* fits ideally into music appreciation classes for the young; it is full of sentiment and obvious effects that appeal to youthful minds. How quickly we seem to outgrow it — but do we? When a musician of Sir



Thomas Beecham's calibre chooses to play this music, we are made conscious of its freshness and charm and its irrefutable right to live and be heard. Too many critics, finding such works as the *Peer Gynt Suites* and Dvorak's *New World Symphony* distressful to their ears after a time, forget the thrill newcomers to music receive upon first hearing them. *Solvejg's Song* has been sung by almost every great soprano since Patti's day. Grieg told Finck that this lied was the only one of his that contained a borrowed melody. Of its many recordings the one I like best is Elisabeth Schumann's (sung in German, Victor disc 1839), but Lucy Isabelle Marsh also sang it well (Victor 4014). There is a recording by Flagstad, made many years ago before she came to this country (H.M.V. AL2006), in which her voice is far more lyrical than in any of her later records. Galli-Curci sang it charmingly in her day, curiously in French (Victor 6924). But perhaps no one sang it more beautifully than Hüni - Mihacsek, that most talented Czech soprano (in German, Polydor 62648); and Emmy Bettendorf also has voiced it with a truly lyric loveliness of tone (Parlophone 9392).

Of *Solvejg's Cradle Song*, Monrad-Johansen says it "gives the *Peer Gynt* music a sublime ending." It is an ineffably sad lied which Solvejg sings when *Peer Gynt* returns at last to die in her

arms. Finck says: "This death song closes the quasi-operatic score of *Peer Gynt*, and if there is, excepting *Tristan and Isolde*, an opera which has a more deeply emotional or a more sorrowful ending, I have not heard it." Lucy Isabelle Marsh sings it nicely (Victor 4014), but she does not convey its full depth of sorrow. Aulikki Rautawaara, the Scandinavian soprano, gives a far more impressive rendition (Telefunken E1795). I have not heard any other recordings of it.

Grieg lives for me in his songs. Often when sitting at the piano turning the pages of his lieder, I find myself conjuring up pictures of him at the keyboard with his charming wife standing by. Even critics have their sentimental moments. It would be absurd to pretend that I knew what her voice sounded like; but I like to imagine it was very close to Noréna's and then again when I listen to Frijsh's records I think perhaps this was the way that Nina Grieg might have sung these songs. Reading of Grieg and his wife, one is not apt to forget their story soon, and though one finds little that is enduring in his instrumental music, his songs are thoroughly infused with the spirit of the man and of his beloved Nina. I can only add that if this article prompts some of our readers to investigate and better to know some of the Grieg lieder, the writer will feel compensated.

## The Story of "Silent Night"

Over a century ago, in the little church of the Austrian village of Arnsdorf on Christmas Eve, the pastor and choir director sat inside staring dejectedly at the silent organ. Christmas services that night would be without music, for the weary organ was broken beyond immediate repair. And Christmas music depended upon the organ!

After what seemed hours of trying to find a remedy, the two men hit upon an idea. Why not write a new Christmas song

which could be sung without the organ's accompaniment . . . a simple song about . . . why, of course, the Birth of Christ. And thus Pastor Franz Gruber and Choir Director Joseph Mohr wrote the song which was to take its place as the foremost Christmas carol of all times, "Silent Night!"

Within a few years the song became the integral part of Christmas Midnight Mass in every church in the Tyrol.

# YONKERS FRIENDS OF RECORDED MUSIC

BEETHOVEN		Ludwig Van		Quartet (String)	
LAST NAME		FIRST NAME		FORM	
				No. 7	Op. 59
SOLIST		HUMBER		KEY	OPUS
Roth Quartet					No. 1
PLAYED BY		POPULAR NAME			
Roth-Antal-Molnar-Scholz		"Rasoumowsky"			
CONDUCTOR		10	12"	CM 256	
		NO. SIDES	SIZE	COMPANY	
Raphael Levy				M	TYPE
OWNER		GSD SIDE			

## FOR THE POSTWAR WORLD -- MORE RECORD CLUBS

By RAPHAEL LEVY

### PART II

The first ingredients for a successful record club are members and a membership policy.

The writer firmly believes that the newly organized club will succeed or fail because of its membership policy. He plumps for democracy. Members should *not* be invited only if they possess large collections, or an excellent machine, or for similar reasons.

The record club should be open to anyone who is interested enough to want to join it. Remember, there are few souls so hardy that they will lightly undertake to join a group that has the seemingly formidable aim of listening to "classical music." The person who is eager to join, even though he possesses no record collection of his own, most likely has other cultural interests that indicate his ability to develop into a first-class enthusiast.

Over a period of time participation in a going club will encourage its members to acquire what they lack. Members without adequate machines are inspired to purchase or build them. Record collections

have a way of growing. Most important, musical appreciation and knowledge grow at a pace that is something to marvel at.

An illustration of this last point occurred within the experience of the Yonkers Friends of Recorded Music. At the group's very first meeting, the program featured among other selections the Prokofieff *Violin Concerto No. 1* (Szigeti). The piece struck no response among most of the group, who listened pained and questioning to the end. It was too alien to their ears—even to the ears of a better than average violinist who was present.

Almost a year later—after some fifty-two meetings—the same selection was again featured on one of our programs. This time what a difference in the response! Prokofieff's music found a highly appreciative audience, and Szigeti's sterling performance aroused great enthusiasm. A checkup showed that four of the members of the club now had the concerto in their own private collections, ranking it as a prize possession.

This story brings me to another requirement for the successful record club—effective programming.

Like membership, programming must be a democratic affair. The ideal program, in a sense, represents what a majority of the members want to hear. Take this as an inflexible rule—the successful club cannot be the expression of a single person's musical likes and dislikes and exist for long.

The writer has known of such groups—called together by an enthusiast with a large machine and a larger collection. For a few successive meetings the audience had poured into its ears what the enthusiast liked, in the manner he liked. After a while the members began to drop away, never to return.

#### The Majority Rule

To insure the growth and success of a record club, it is better that the evening's program should feature the Tchaikovsky *E Minor Symphony*, to the enjoyment of a majority of the members and the discomfort of a minority, than that the program should feature Bach's *Art of the Fugue*, for the minority's enjoyment while the majority find themselves baffled and without interest. Let there be democratic programming in the beginning—plus some democratically agreed-upon musical experimentation—and the time will arrive when most of the club will want to listen to the *Art of the Fugue* and will enjoy it.

In the Yonkers Friends of Recorded Music we draw up our programs in advance to cover a six-meeting period. Generally, each program is planned to run about a hundred minutes, a little more than an hour and a half, and roughly about twenty 12-inch sides. Experience has shown this to be the most satisfactory program length for our group. A ten or fifteen minute business session, midway in the program, provides the intermission break. Our most successful programs have been built around a central theme. The theme has invariably furnished continuity to our listening and added greatly to our enjoyment and interest.

I suggest that for the average beginning club the theme at first be a simple one—let's say a series of best known symphonies. Such a series of programs might include the Beethoven *Fifth*, the Schubert *Unfinished*, the Dvorak *New World*, the

Mozart *G Minor*, and similar favorites.

If this hardly sounds exciting to the "well-listened" record enthusiast, let him not despair. The Yonkers Friends of Recorded Music—after some initial mistakes in programming—started out with such themes as "Best Known Symphonies", "Best Known Piano Concertos", etc. Some sixty programs later, this was a typical program, one of a combined "Bach and Cello Concerto Series":

BACH: *Suite No. 3 in D major* (Brussels Conservatory Orchestra, dir. Defauw)

BACH: *Concerto for Four Claviers and Orchestra* (Pignari, Leroux, Rolet, Coppola, and Orch.)

BACH: *Italian Concerto* (Wanda Landowska)

BACH: *Violin Concerto in E major* (Menuhin, Enesco and Orch.)

BLOCH: *Schelomo* (Feuermann with Philadelphia Orch., dir. Stokowski)

The Yonkers Friends have at one time or another drawn up series of programs that enabled them to hear:

The chamber music of Schubert and Dvorak; the quartets of Haydn; the sixteen quartets of Beethoven; examples of early music—French, Italian, German, English, etc.; representative American composers; the piano concertos of Mozart (14 out of the 17 recorded); the music of Henry Purcell; the music of three French composers—D'Indy, Lekeu, Chausson; and many other selections. The possibilities for such series, drawing on fresh and unhackneyed music, are limited only by the albums the club members possess, or can borrow.

Good programming is facilitated by a good master card catalogue listing the possessions of all the club membership. Therefore, the card catalogue becomes another ingredient of the successful record club.

The Yonkers Friends have three officers only: a president, a secretary-treasurer, and a librarian. The librarian maintains the club card catalogue, and serves on the program committee of the organization. At intervals, he requests the members to inform him of their new acquisitions and enters these in the catalogue. Where more

than one member of the club owns the same work, their names are all listed on the card. Where club members own two different performances of the same work, separate cards are made out for each one. (For an example of the club's card see the illustration at the head of this article.) Cards are also furnished individual members who desire them, for their own catalogues.

Working from the catalogue, a program committee of three members draws up a six-meeting program series. Usually, the theme of the series has been decided upon by the club members previous to the meeting of the program committee. The recommendations of the program committee are then submitted for approval or change at a regular club meeting about two weeks in advance of the time the new series is to start.

New record clubs will have to solve the problem of a place to meet. The Yonkers Friends hold their meetings in the homes of members; each member who is able to do so accommodates the club in his turn. But other solutions can be found—YMCA's, public libraries, and other recreational institutions have meeting places and even phonographic equipment.

Not all of the activity of the Yonkers Friends is confined to its regularly scheduled programs. Occasionally, a worthwhile novelty varies our activities. Two years ago (before gas rationing), the editor of *The American Music Lover* played host to the group at his home in Pelham Manor. It was a memorable evening for all of us, for we were able to browse through the editor's extensive and unusual collection, and to hear the music reproduced from an outfit which then had a remarkable air-column loudspeaker system. More recently, we were again entertained and this time we heard the editor's new three-speaker outfit, which offers a most natural and realistic response. The lack of distortion and the reproduction of all overtones makes the set an ideal one for the home.

Annually, the club has held one of its meetings at the summer home of Dr. B., a member. There in the open, beneath

stately pines that overlook a nearby lake, we have enjoyed our music to the full. And we all retain the memory of the late Mrs. B., who was our gracious host on those occasions.

The club maintains a small treasury. Dues amounting to ten cents a meeting have proved painless—and our funds have grown. Out of them, we have purchased a dozen albums that we would hesitate to buy as individuals. The complete *Don Giovanni* of Mozart (Glyndebourne Festival Co.) represents more than any of us alone would have cared to spend. But we now own it as a group. And we have started a small library of books on music and records as well. Both records and books are loaned to members.

Through still another club project, the ingenuity and skill of several members resulted in our assembling a passable phonograph out of old parts. This machine—portable (after a fashion)—was lent to members who had no machines of their own.

Just before the full effect of the war began to be felt by the club, we seriously considered the possibility of setting up our own home-recording establishment. Through it we would have been in a position to take off the air much worthwhile music that has not yet been recorded. But events intervened, and the project now awaits the time when the boys come home.

Looking back now, as the Yonkers Friends of Recorded Music enters its sixth year, there is not one member who does not feel that the club represents one of the most important factors in his musical life. Nearly two hundred and fifty meetings—representing almost four hundred hours of glorious music and satisfying friendship—have been shared by the club's members.

As I said earlier, those who are left behind are determined to keep the group going until the time when the boys come home. We look forward to that time. We hope too, that the record club idea will take hold throughout the country, and that there will be other groups with whom we may exchange ideas and information to add to the enjoyment of our favorite pursuit.

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BEETHOVEN: *Quartet in C major, Op. 59, No. 3*; Calvet Quartet. E3066/69.

BEETHOVEN: *Quartet in F minor, Op. 95*; Calvet Quartet. E2960/62.

BEETHOVEN: *Kreutzer Sonata, Op. 47*; Georg Kulenkampff and S. Schultze. L3108/11.

BRUCKNER: *Symphony No. 4 (Romantic)*; Hambourg State Philharmonic Orchestra, conducted by Eugen Jochum. SK3032/39.

BRUCKNER: *Symphony No. 7 in E major*; Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, conducted by Eugen Jochum. SK3000/07.

HAYDN: *Quartet in D major, Op. 33, No. 3*; Calvet Quartet. A2243/45.

IBERT: *Sonata for Violin and Piano*; Georg Kulenkampff and unnamed pianist. A2653.

MOZART: *Concerto in A major, K. 219*; Georg Kulenkampff (violin) and German Opera Orchestra, Berlin, conducted by Rother. E3044/47.

MOZART: *Quartet in F major, K. 370* (Oboe Quartet); Wiesbaden Musical College Group. E3070/71.

MOZART: *Quartet in G major, K. 387*; Calvet Quartet. E2867/69.

MOZART: *Quartet in A major, K. 464*; International Union of Chamber Music. E3014/16.

RAVEL: *Spanish Rhapsody*; Belgian National Radio Symphony Orchestra of Brussels, conducted by M. André. E2987/88.

STRAVINSKY: *Concerto in E flat major* (for 16 Instruments); Chamber Orchestra of the Hamburg State Philharmonic, conducted by Schmidt-Isserstedt. E2994/95.

TARREGA: *Jota*; and DOMINICI: *Italian Fantasy*; Luise Walker (guitar). A1672.

TCHAIKOVSKY: *Concerto in B flat minor, Op. 23*; Hansen (piano) and Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, conducted by Willem Mengelberg. SK-3092/95.

TCHAIKOVSKY: *Concerto in D major, Op. 35*; Kulenkampff (violin) and German Opera Orchestra, Berlin, conducted by Rother. E3010/13.

French Discs, issued in 1941

BEETHOVEN: *Quartet in E flat, Op. 74*; Quatuor Gabriel Bouillon. French HMV DB5127/30.

BEETHOVEN: *Rondino in E flat* (for 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 horns, 2 bassoons); Société des Instruments à vent, dir. F. Oubradous. H.M.M. DA4926.

BEETHOVEN: *Sonata in D minor, Op. 31, No. 2*; Boris Zadri (piano). Pathé 147/48.

CHARPENTIER: *Louise-Depius le jour*; and CHOPIN-DE-BADET: *Animé* (3rd Etude); Ninon Vallin (soprano) with orchestra, dir. Marcel Cariven. Columbia LFX594.

CHAUSSON: *Le colibri*; and DUPARC: *Soupir*; Pierre Bernac (tenor) and Francis Poulenc (piano). H.M.V. DA4928.

CHOPIN: *Waltzes* (13); Alfred Cortot (piano). H.M.V. DB2311/2318.

FAURÉ: *Après un rêve*, and *Lydia*; Pierre Bernac (tenor) and Francis Poulenc (piano). H.M.V. DA4931.

FAURE: *Les berceaux*, and *Automne*; M. Endrèze (baritone) and Mme. Endrèze-Krieger. Pathé PA1986.

FAURE: *Second Piano Quartet*, Op. 45; Marguerite Long (piano), Jacques Thibaud (violin), Maurice Vieux (viola), and Pierre Fournier (cello). H.M.V. DB5103/06.

FRANCK: *Quintet*; Lucette Descaves-Truc (piano) and Quatuor Gabriel Bouillon. H.M.V. DB5123/26.

FRENCH MASTERS OF THE MIDDLE AGES: *Belle Ysabelot* (13th century, trans. P. Aubry); *Rondeau et virelai* (Adam de la Hale, trans. J. Chailley) (H.M.V. disc DB5116); *Complainte de Constantinople* (G. Dufay, trans. Chailley); *Bon jour, bon mois* (G. Dufay, trans. A. Stainer); *L'amour de moy* (trans. Chailley) (disc DB5117); *Messe du sacre de Charles V* (Guillaume de Machaut, trans. A. Gastoué) *Kyrie and Qui propter nos; Salvatoris hodie* (Pérotin-le-Grand, trans. Chailley) (disc DB5118); *Diffusa est* (Pérotin-le-Grand, trans. Y. Rokseth); *Crucifigat omnes* (Ecole de Notre-Dame de Paris, 13th century) (disc DB5119); sung by La Psallete Notre-Dame, direction of Jacques Chailley.

HONEGGER: *La Danse des Morts* (Oratorio) (poème de Paul Claudel); 1. *Dialogue*, 2. *Danse des Morts*, 3. *Lamento*, 4. *Sanglots*, 5. *La Réponse de Dieu*, 6. *Espérance dans la Croix*, 7. *Affirmation*; soloists — Chas. Panzéra (baritone), Mmes. Turba-Rabier and Schenneberg, Chorale de Yvonne Gourné, Récitant — Jean-Louis Barrault, Orchestra de la Société des Concerts du Conservatoire, direction of Charles Munch. H.M.V. DB5135/37.

HAYDN: *Symphony in D major* (No. 53 — Imperial); Orchestra de la Société des Concerts du Conservatoire, conducted by Charles Munch. H.M.V. DB-5131/32.

LECLAIR: *Concerto in F major*, Op. 7, No. 4; Dominique Blot (violin) with Ensemble conducted by Claude Crussard. H.M.V. DB5133/34.

LECLAIR: *Sonata in F major* (3 sides) and *Sicilienne* (1 side); D. Blot and

Ortmans - Bach (violins), Yvonne Thibout (cello), Claude Crussard (clavécin). H.M.V. DB5107/08.

MAUDIT (1557-1627): *En son temple sacré*, and LULLY (trans. G. Renard): *La puissance de Dieu*; Chorale de la Cathédrale de Strasbourg. Columbia RFX74.

MESSANGER: *Selections from Veronique* and *L'Amour masque*; Yvonne Printemps with orchestra. H.M.V. DB5114.

MOZART: *Concerto No. 3 in E flat* (Horn); L. Trevet (soloist) with orchestra, dir. Fernand Oubradous. H.M.V. DA4929/30.

MOZART: *Concerto in G major*, K. 41; Marguerite Rosegen-Champian (piano) with orchestra, dir. Albert Wolff. Columbia RFX 75/76.

POULENC: *Le chemin de l'amour*; and YVAIN: *Je chante la nuit*; Yvonne Printemps with orchestra, dir. Marcel Cariven. H.M.V. DA4927.

RAMEAU: *La nuit* (arr. J. Noyon), and ANONYMOUS (arr. A. Philip): *Les danseurs noyés*; La Manécanterie des Petits Chanteurs à la Croix de Bois. H.M.V. K8497.

SCHUBERT: *Trio in B flat major*, Op. 99; Benvenuti (piano), Benedetti (violin), Navarra (cello). Pathé PGT29/32.

SCHUBERT: *Mondenshein*; Vocal ensemble; P. Derenne, soloist; dir. Nadia Boulanger. DA4925.

SCHUMANN: *Ich hab' im Traum geweinet* and *Wenn ich in deine Augen seh'*; M. Endrèze (baritone) with piano. Pathé PA1545.

TCHAIKOVSKY: *Russian Mass*; Choeurs de la Cathédrale Russe à Paris, dir. Nicolas Afonsky. H.M.V. DB5120/22.

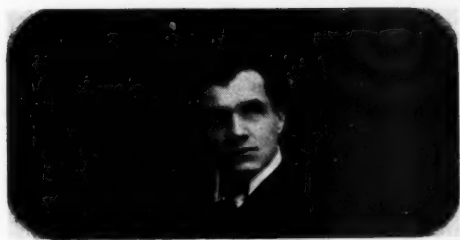
Cetra Discs (Italy), recently issued

VERDI: *La Forza del Destino* (complete recording), with Galliani Masini (tenor), Tancredi Pasero (bass), Carlo Tagliabue (baritone), Maria Caniglia (soprano), Ebe Stignani (mezzo-soprano), Marinuzzi (conductor). Nos. not specified.

French Discs, 1940

BONNAL, Emmend: *Trio*; Pasquier Trio. Pathé PAT124/26.

(Continued on page 107)



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## EDMOND CLEMENT - LYRIC TENOR

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By Stephen Fassett

There was something unforgettable about Edmond Clement, a quality not easily defined or analyzed: A glance at his photograph reveals a man of intelligence, taste and refinement, in appearance utterly different from the average tenor. Listening to his records confirms this impression; the same three characteristics make themselves immediately felt. But underneath the elegant surface of his style burned an inspiration of such force, such perception, that Clement, the dramatic artist, transcended Clement, the vocalist; he became a singing actor whose triumphs are still recounted with awe by his fellow artists. The writer will never forget the expression on Geraldine Farrar's face when she was speaking of Clement as Don José in the last act of *Carmen*. Indicating the tip of her little finger by way of emphasis, she said: "What he did with *that* much voice!" Words failed her, but her meaning was clear. Rarely does one artist give such a tribute to another.

Edmond Clement was born in Paris in 1867. With his brother Georges, who later became a throat specialist, he sang as a boy soprano in the great Cathedral at Chartres. There something of the beauty, clarity and color of those magnificent windows entered into his voice, or so it would seem to one who has often noted its unique, slightly sombre timbre.

Headed for the career of a civil engineer, Edmond graduated from the Ecole

Polytechnique—a noteworthy achievement, for in France a graduate of that institution is regarded as a person of exceptional mentality. The lure of music proved too strong to be resisted, however, and Clement gave up engineering and entered the Paris Conservatoire where, a year later, his singing won him a prize. He was then asked to join the Opéra Comique, although he had taken no lessons in acting. In 1889 he made his début in Gounod's *Mireille* and soon became a popular artist. His voice at that time has been described as a light, sweet tenor.

The only criticism of Edmond in his early days that I have been able to locate, is one contrary to the reputation the tenor ultimately gained. One wonders if its redoubtable author ever heard at a later date any of Edmond's recordings, in which his gifted artistry is most favorably substantiated. However, since the dissenting voice is none other than George Bernard Shaw's, it may be well to let him have his say before one takes up the cudgels in Clement's behalf. Shaw's criticism was written in July, 1894 (it appears in his book, *Music In London—1890-94*; Constable & Co., London). At that time Shaw went to hear Clement at the newly opened Errard, a hall the Irish music lover disliked because it was excessively resonant and had windows painted in a style he considered in poor taste. This is what he wrote:

"Having already heard Clement at St.

James's Hall, I had great hopes that he would break the windows with one of those strident notes of which he is so proud. I must own that he did his best; but the glass was too thick; and finally it was I who was sent flying into the street. I would ask Clement seriously whether he thinks the English people have built up their nation through all these centuries only to sit down now and hear a young man yell at the top of his voice. That may be very well for the gallery of the Opéra Comique, for the suburbs, for the provinces, for Australia, for South Africa, for City dinners, for smoking concerts, and other barbarous places; but in the true artistic centre of London 'people don't do such things,' as Judge Brack has it. I have no doubt that Clement could sing very nicely if he wanted to; but, like most tenors, he doesn't want to. That is why great tenors are so rare, although good voices are so plentiful."

#### Serious or Otherwise

One can never be certain when Shaw is being simply facetious or really serious. Now, if it really was true, as he asserts, that Clement did not wish to sing well, perhaps it was the Shavian witticism which put the young tenor on the right track. I am sure that G.B.S. would have given us a very different criticism had he heard Clement as a mature artist. Judging his artistry solely from his recordings: if ever there was a tenor who did not yell, it was Edmond Clement. Essentially, he was the lyric singer, and his gift of pure *legato*—as evidenced in his records—was often extraordinary. There are those who, preferring a more robust type of voice, profess that Clement's singing was not manly. Endowed by nature with a true lyrical sweetness of tone, the tenor apparently strove in his early work (at least, it would seem that he did by Shaw's criticism) to make his voice larger and more robust. How wise he was to forego this type of singing and to realize the most consummate artistry in his own *forte* can be judged from most of his recordings. There was an innate erotic appeal to his voice which made him ideal in such roles as Romeo, Des Grieux and Don José.

By the time Clement came to America in 1909, he was regarded by many as the greatest French tenor of his day. He had sung twenty seasons at the Opéra Comique; he had been chosen by Massenet in 1905 to sing Des Grieux in the 500th performance of *Manon*; and it was reported that he had sung in every principal theatre in Europe. As a member of the Metropolitan Opera Company, he made his début on November 16th in the first performance given by that company at the New Theatre. The opera was Massenet's *Werther*, and Geraldine Farrar, Alma Gluck and Gilly were in the cast. One of the critics wrote of Clement that his was the most faultless phrasing and the most graceful singing that had been heard here since the days of Jean de Reszke.

#### A N. Y. Critic's Praise

Richard Aldrich, writing in the New York Times around this time, said of Clement's artistry: "His voice is one of the lightest of tenors, but it has a remarkably penetrating quality, much of which is due to the excellence of his production of tone. His diction has all the polish of the best style . . . Mr. Clement's style is one of much finish and poise, guided by most perfect taste and sense of proportion, and this does not mean that he is devoid of true feeling, imagination and even passion. His range of emotional expression is undoubtedly rather circumscribed by the nature of his vocal resources . . . but within his limitations he gives a true and deeply felt utterance of the significance of what he sings."

It is unfortunate that Clement became a member of the Metropolitan Opera Company at a time when Italian influence there was far too strong. He left the organization after only a year, having been informed by Gatti-Casazza, so I am told, that if he was re-engaged for the next season he would be required to sing chiefly Italian roles, taking the place of Bonci, who had gone into concert singing. This, following the disappointing treatment the Metropolitan has accorded Marie Delna, the noted French contralto, would seem to indicate a line of policy. The French wing of the Metropolitan, in truth, never

amounted to much after Grau retired from the managership.

In the years 1911-13, Clement sang much with the Boston Opera Company, where he built up an enviable reputation as a great interpretive artist. Don José was then probably his most admired role. Of his performance in this role, a Boston critic wrote: "His singing, his remarkable artistic employment of a small voice is now too well known in the principal cities of this country to call for any extended remarks upon this score, but it is impossible to forebear from speaking of the histrionic side of his achievements. Whatever effect he desired to achieve, it was procured with the most remarkable economy of effort, with such unostentatious mastery that even when the final climax was reached in the last scene, and the audience simply tense watching him, there seemed to be left a certain amount of reserve. And the final scene, from the moment that the man staggered in, worn, haggard, a growth of weeks on his face, with the eyes of a fiend, was given with an intensity that almost forbade applause when the curtain fell."

#### A Versatile Artist

As much a musician as a man of the theatre, Clement was one of the few operatic artists who have been able to step into the difficult role of the recitalist with complete success. His delightful concerts were so popular that when he sang in Carnegie Hall there wasn't even standing room left. He did not make the mistake of leaning too heavily on operatic arias preferring to feature the songs of Berlioz, Weckerlin, Massenet, Grieg, Gabriel Fauré, Debussy, Hahn and other French composers.

When the War came, Clement, then a man in his late forties with a wife and children, joined the French Army as a volunteer and was wounded in April, 1915. Not until three years after the War did he visit us again, for the last time. His concerts then were less successful than before, but back in France he continued to give recitals as late as 1925. He died in February, 1928, when he was sixty-one years old.

December, 1943

Of one of Clement's last concerts, a musician wrote: "I heard Clement in the second of two concerts at the Salle Gaveau, Paris, in June 1925. He had then much less voice than when he sang in New York in 1921, but his art was so great that he entranced his audiences. A notable performance of that evening was the *Journoiment* of Saint-Saens, but I especially like to remember Gretchaninoff's *Over the Steppe*, which, with almost no voice, he sang far more tellingly and dramatically than the most dramatic soprano I have ever heard attempt it."

For Odéon, in Paris about 1905, Clement recorded five operatic arias, four of which he did not duplicate later for Victor. Of these four, three have been made available here in recent years by The International Record Collector's Club. An aria from Boildieu's *La Dame Blanche* proved disappointing, consisting as it did almost entirely of one phrase, "Ah! quel plaisir d'être soldat," repeated over and over again. A more stupid piece of music cannot be imagined! More interesting were *Ab! fuyez, douce image (Manon)* and *Ab! lève-toi, soleil! (Roméo et Juliette)* which were doubled on IRCC 205. They are of supplementary importance, because the high tones sound somewhat fresher and stronger than those found in the later recordings, but if the writer had heard only these three Odeons this article never would have been written.

In the domestic Pathé catalogs of the period 1917-20, half a dozen titles are listed under Clement's name. Undoubtedly recorded later than the Victors, they are delightful and it is a pity that Pathé discs, which are grooved by the vertical or hill-and-dale cut, cannot be played successfully on standard machines. The Canadian Pathé catalog at one time listed other Clement records which have not yet come my way.

#### Clement's Victor Discs (Recorded in 1912)

(Double-faced numbers in parentheses at right)

- 64223 PESSARD: *L'Adieu du matin*;  
PESSARD-WECKERLIN: *Bergère légère* (559)  
64226 BERNARD: *Ca fait peur aux oiseaux*



- 64232 ARCADET-TIERSOT: Chanson  
Lorraine
- 64233 GODARD: Jocelyn—Berceuse  
(559)
- 74258 MASSENET: Manon—Le Rêve  
(6062)
- 74319 FAURE: Les Rameaux
- 74264 LALO: L' Roi d'Ys—Vainement, ma  
bien aimée (6062)
- 64294 MASSENET: Sonnet matinal;  
BEMBERG: Il neige
- 64234 MASSENET: Werther — Pourquoi  
me reveiller (902)

**Clement and Miss Farrar**

- 87509 LULLY: Au clair de la lune (3025)
- 87508 GODARD: Dante—Nous allons  
partir tous deux
- 88422 BOITO: Mefistofele—Lontano, lon-  
tano (8020)
- 88421 GOUNOD: Roméo et Juliette —  
Ange adorable (8020)
- 87507 SCHUMANN: Sous la fenêtre

**Clement and Marcel Journet**

- 76022 BIZET: Les Pêcheurs de Perles—  
Au fond du temple saint (8017)
- 76020 MEYERBEER: Robert le Diable  
Du rendezvous (IRCC 138)
- 76021 MEYERBEER: Robert le Diable  
—Le bonheur (IRCC 138)  
Clement's Odeon Discs
- 56003 ROSSINI: Barber of Seville —  
Cavatina
- 56002 BOIELDIEU: La Dame blanche—  
Ah! quel plaisir d'être soldat
- 56050 MASSENET: Le Rêve
- 56001 MASSENET: Manon—Ah! fuyez,  
douce image
- 56000 GOUNOD: Roméo et Juliette —  
Cavatine

**Clement's Pathé Discs**

- 59051 PESSARD: L'Adieu du matin, and  
MASSENET: Manon—Le Rêve
- 59017 ANON.: Filles des Rochelles, and  
MEMBERG: Il neige; PESSARD-  
WECKERLIN: Bergère légère
- 59006 DELIBES: Lakmé—Fantaisie aux  
ailes d'or, and HAHN: Mai

**Other Pathé Discs (circa 1920)**

- 0120 MASCAGNI: Cavalleria Rusticana  
—Sicilienne (with piano)
- 3099 Chanson Lorraine
- 0121 La Dame blanche—Cavatine (uni-  
identified)
- 3098 MARTINI: Plaisir d'amour
- 0119 Werther—Pourquoi me reveiller

To appreciate Clement's Victor records, it is not necessary to be a dyed-in-the-wool phonographic antiquarian with an imagination trained to compensate automatically for any deficiencies in the sounds conveyed to the ear by old recordings. It is well that the acoustic method of recording was often notably successful in capturing the human voice, and because Clement's tenor was light in weight and smoothly produced, it recorded particularly well. Hearing his records properly reproduced, there is no feeling that the vocal cream is being skimmed. It sounds as though it were all there, emerging without hindrance or obstruction. The accompaniments, of course, are inferior to those on modern records, but if pallid they are not unpleasant and will not detract from the pleasure of those who truly love good singing.\*

As revealed by recordings made when he was forty-five years old, Clement's richly nuanced voice is treasurable chiefly for its exquisite yet always *manly* lyricism. The tone quality, unlike that of nearly all other French tenors, is free from nasality, susceptible to the most subtle shadings, and autumnal in hue. The range is adequate, though the topmost tones tend to whiteness in moments of dramatic stress. Those who seek in tenors notes high, long and loud had better not waste their time and money on Clement records! The tenor's command of *legato*, however, and of such fine points as the *diminuendo*, is worthy of the best traditions of *bel canto*. The elegance of his phrasing and the perfection of his diction have never been surpassed. Aside from these purely vocal attributes, which in themselves are rare enough, Clement was an interpretive musician of the first rank. It is no wonder that he has never had a worthy successor.

Clement and Geraldine Farrar were an ideal recording team. They seem to have

\*The most convincing proof known to the writer of the ability of Clement's recorded singing to captivate the modern music lover was the response received a few years ago by a broadcast program of his discs. This broadcast was one of a series which featured many of the greatest voices of all time, with comment provided by the artists themselves in some cases. Far from being overshadowed, Clement's outshone nearly all the others and the singer, who had then been dead for eleven years, would have rejoiced at the quantity and quality of the letters written by his latter-day radio fans.

inspired each other and the records they made together show both artists at their best. The superbly sung duets from *Mefistofele* and *Roméo*, with their charming version of *Au Clair de la Lune*, remained in the catalog well into the 'twenties and should not be too hard to find. The piece from Godard's *Dante* was not listed by Victor after 1919, but before the present war it could be imported on special order from England (HMV-DA211). The pleasant music is inconsequential but the singing is noteworthy. The Schumann duet was on sale only a very short time and now seldom turns up. It deserved a better fate.

The duet from Meyerbeer's *Robert le Diable*, with Journet (in 2 parts), is a brilliant performance of music which has a way of sounding like Gilbert and Sullivan turned into French! Bizet's melodious *Au fond du temple saint* has always been a favorite, but for some reason this performance failed to come off as well as it should have, yet it must be regarded as the most artistic rendition of this duet extant.

Clement's operatic solos have never been equalled and seldom approached by recent tenors. The arias from *Manon* and *Le Roi d'Ys*, (doubled on 6062), were kept in the catalog for 30 years, an honor given to few non-Caruso acoustic recordings. This disc has been cut from the catalog since the 1940-41 edition, but some dealers may still have a few copies left over. The *Jocelyn* is a memorable example of what a great artist can do with hackneyed material. Clement's handling of the opening

lines of recitative is sheer perfection. The sombre air from *Werther* is magnificently sung. This is one of the few records that give us an idea of the dramatic side of Clement's art, which is also beautifully suggested in the opening phrases of the *Mefistofele* duet with Farrar. *Les Rameaux* is properly dramatized, too; what a poor song it is, yet what he does for it!

Far more likely to appeal to the modern music lover, by reason of their unpretentious and inescapable charm, are such rollicking songs as *Chanson Lorraine*, written in 1507 by Arcadet (arranged by Julien Tiersot) and done to a turn by Clement in a performance that breathes the spirit of old France.\* Irresistible, too, is *Bergère Légère*, which dates back to the 18th Century. It is sung with indescribable grace. The Massenet and Bemberg songs (64294) have comparatively little interest, being too obviously the products of over-perfumed salons. Of genuine merit, however, are *L'Adieu du matin* and Bernard's *Ca fait peur aux oiseaux*, an unusual little masterpiece with a flavor all its own, which tells of two lovers in a grove. One begs the other to be silent, lest the birds be frightened away from their bower. Again the singing is infused with magic. The records are characteristic of Clement—haunting and forgettable.

\* Richard Aldrich in the N. Y. Times once wrote of Clement's singing of this song in a recital: "This Mr. Clement gave with a gay and humorous touch of action and gesture to illustrate the verses of the song—and the touch was just light enough and just suggestive enough to be exactly in place. Nothing that he did was more characteristic and deserved more the enthusiasm with which it was received and which prompted him to repeat it."

## European Records

(Continued from page 102)

CHAUSSON: *Le charme; Le papillons; Le colibri*; Ninon Vallin (soprano) and Pierre Darck (piano). Pathé PG100.

JOSQUIN DE PRES: *O Domine Jesu Christe*; and PIERRE DE LA RUE: *O Salutaris Hostia*; Chorus of the Strasbourg Cathedral, dir. A. Hoch. Columbia RFX73.

VICTORIA: *Popule meus*; and JEAN MOULTON: *Ave Maria*; same chorus. Columbia RFX71.

MOZART: *Concerto in G major, K. 216*; Denise Soriano (violin) with orchestra dir. J. Boucherit. Pathé PAT127/29.

MOZART: *Quartet in E flat, K. 171*; Loewenguth Quartet. Polydor 566207-/08.

VIVALDI (arr. Dandelot): *Concerto in D minor, Op. 3, No. 11*; Denise Soriano (violin) with orchestra, dir. Charles Munch. Pathé PAT154/55.

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### Voice

**METROPOLITAN REVIVALS** with Enrico Caruso and All Star Casts in Operatic Ensembles. **DONIZETTI:** *Lucia di Lammermoor*—*Sextet, Act II*; sung by Caruso, Tetrizzini, Amato, Journet, Jacoby, Bada, with Metropolitan Opera Chorus; **VERDI:** *Un Ballo in Maschera*—*Quintet, Act I, Ed scherzo ed è follia*; sung by Caruso, Hempel, Duchéne, Rothier and De Segura (disc 16-5000); **VERDI:** *Rigoletto*—*Quartet, Act III*; sung by Caruso, Sembrich, Scotti and Severina; **PUCCINI:** *La Bohème*—*Quartet, Act III*; sung by Caruso, Scotti, Farrar and Viafora (disc 16-5001);

**FLOTOW:** *Martha*—*Dormi pur* (Good Night Quartet); sung by Caruso, Alda, Journet and Jacoby; **VERDI:** *I Lombardi*—*Qual volta trascorrere* (Trio, Act III); sung by Caruso, Alda and Journet (disc 16-5002); **GOUNOD:** *Faust*—*Final trio, Act V*; sung by Caruso, Farrar and Journet; **SAINT-SAËNS:** *Samson et Dalila*—*Je viens célébrer la victoire* (Trio, Act I); sung by Caruso, Homer and Journet (disc 16-5003). Victor set M-953, price \$10.50.

▲ There is irony in Victor's release of this album at this time to celebrate the Metropolitan Opera's Diamond Jubilee. It would be utterly impossible for that organization to match the singing in these old recordings in this day and age. Yet, how many listeners of today will turn away from modern radio, from the broadcasts from the stage of the Metropolitan, to hear singers of days gone by reproduced by a method that, despite its preservation of the great voices, remains nonetheless obsolete? The orchestral backgrounds here are but travesties of the originals, and on modern machines these orchestral backgrounds emerge as distortions, which they really were, since wind instruments were used to supplement low strings in the days of acoustic recording.

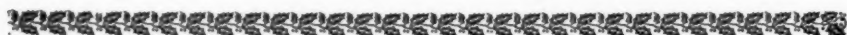
But, if one is interested in great singing, there is plenty of it here, and many an old-time opera-goer will have pleasant memories revived through these discs.

The sponsors of this set place before its title this caption: "Victor Hall of Immortal Series Presents." Perhaps nowhere else is there such an "Immortal Series" of recordings as in the archives of Victor. Yet, in reviving interest in the great singers of by-gone days, Victor has shown little regard for or comprehension of the material that they have tucked away. In the set, *Voices of the Golden Age of Opera, Vol. 1* (no. 816), the selections were for the most part poorly chosen to represent the various artists. Here, in the present set, one can also be critical of the material chosen, yet, on the whole, it shows more ingenuity than the other album. But Victor needs someone familiar over a long period of years with the cut-out material and the interests of record buyers in general, to make up albums of this sort properly.

Victor has supplied copious notes on the singers and the various recordings, giving the date of each, and comments, by and large from trade journals of the

day, regarding their merits. The text of the various scenes and mention of their place in the various operas are strangely omitted. Information on almost all the scenes can, of course, be obtained in the *Victor Book of the Opera*, and more specifically from librettos.

For 17 years (1903-1920), Enrico Caruso was the recognized first singer of the Metropolitan Opera Company; the repertoire was selected with him in mind and many new operas and most revivals were planned especially for him. Farrar, too, occupied a prominent place, from 1906 to 1922. The idea in this album has been to feature the artistry of Caruso, and it must be said at the outset that he is heard to advantage in every selection. I never heard Caruso in the role of Edgardo, and I do not recall him singing it from 1909 to 1920, which was the period during which I heard him regularly. I recall vividly the 1913 revival of *Un Ballo in Maschera*; the cast was one of the most notable I have ever heard in any opera. Caruso's performance as Riccardo far surpassed any other tenor's; he was not guilty of the exaggerations of style indulged in by Bonci and other tenors,



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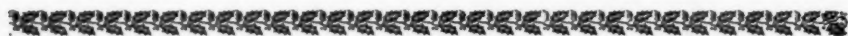
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as his singing of the quintet in this set will prove. Caruso's performance of the Duke in *Rigoletto* was almost legend in his time; the role fitted him like the proverbial glove. His Rodolfo in *Bobème* was another achievement; Farrar, on the other hand, was not an ideal Mimi, although she brought out the pathos of the part and left one completely in sympathy with the character. Scotti and Gina Viafora were all-time favorites in the roles of Marcello and Musetta. The recording of the lovely third-act quartet is one of the finest quartet recordings in existence. Both Caruso and Alda excelled in their roles in *Martha*, and the several quartet recordings that they made with Journet and Jacoby are all splendidly sung. *I Lombardi* was never sung by Caruso at the Metropolitan, nor anywhere else as far as I know. The trio recorded occurs in the last act and begins at the moment when Orontes renounces his Saracen faith and

becomes a Christian for the sake of his sweetheart, Giselda. The priest who officiates in his becoming a Christian is the third singer. The singing of this scene is notably accomplished, yet this recording is definitely overshadowed by the Gigli-Rethberg-Pinza electrical recording (8194). I have but recently written about the trio from *Samson et Dalila*. Caruso's Samson was one of his great roles in later years. Homer's Dalila was, on the other hand, a rather tame characterization; one felt her Dalila emanated from New England rather than from Palestine. The voice of Gerville-Réache should have been heard here with Caruso. However, the singing here is both artistic and effective.

When all these recordings were issued, as single sides of course, their aggregate cost was around \$42. Later, when old Victor Red Seals were sold at low prices many of the original singles could have been bought at around 79 and 89 cents.

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—P. H. R.

**MOORE:** *The Night Before Christmas*; and **THOMPSON:** *Little Jesus*; recited by Basil Rathbone, with the Robert Mitchell Boychoir. Columbia disc 7407-M, price \$1.00.

▲ Listen my children and you shall hear, a tale of Christmas that is old and dear, retold in the modern Hollywood sentimental style, with singing boys and Sherlock-Rathbone striving to guile.

Clement Clark Moore's *The Night Before Christmas* is almost a folk legend; it is doubtful whether one out of a hundred who read it at Christmas to their youngsters know its author's name. Very few of us living have not had that tale read to us at some time or the other, and very few of us who are parents have not

read it to our own children. Mr. Rathbone is such a long way from my first experience with this tale that he will forgive me if I seem unappreciative of his cultured efforts to make the tale realistic to young minds who gaze in bewilderment and wonder at that modern contrivance known as the phonograph when he is permitted to hold forth. An old colored Mammy first read this tale to me, and her efforts to supply realism were far more appealing to my youthful mind than Mr. Rathbone's efforts were to a neighbor's child for whom I played his recording. "Why do the boys sing?", asked the neighbor's child. Why, indeed! "That is the Hollywood touch," I answered, and immediately I was asked what is Hollywood and a dozen similar questions. Does anyone actually have to tell the very young today what Hollywood is, and what it stands for; moreover, could one really tell them? So much that is fine in every way comes out of Hollywood, and so much that is trumpery and oversentimentalized. But some folks like this sort of thing and I daresay there are those who really believe that Mr. Rathbone could never make a mistake or do anything that was not letter-perfect.

—P. H. R.

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## Book Review

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(Continued from page 90)

The editor has selected material from a great many representative writers of America, and he has neglected to select material from a great many others.

It is my view that if your knowledge of music and interest in it have passed the rudimentary stage, you will find that only a few of the articles in the anthology will hold your attention.

—L. M. Johnstone.

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